

THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

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In treating the subject assigned us, it is proper to say that baptism is a condition of the remission of sins, and yet it is only one of those numerous properties (among which we institute no comparison) that the child of God is obliged to supply. It procures nothing for us in the way of salvation, it is not the ransom price paid for favors to be received, nor does it merit anything when, as an attribute, it consummates the series which pronounces us children of Christ. It is simply a divine exaction to which we must yield implicit and prompt obedience.

What then is the object of this sacred rite? I believe the reply to our inquiry may be summed up in the statement that the design of baptism is to bring us into that new relationship with Christ, which is the final formal step in our attainment to fellowship with Jesus our Lord.

In the Christian system much is made of faith, and this is right, for faith is the hand with which we appropriate the blessings of salvation; it is the eye that sees the Christ; it is the soul, if we may so speak, that receives him in all his fullness. But the strongest saving faith, remaining alone, if such a case is supposable, does not bring us into covenant relationship with the Christ. Nor can repentance of itself effect this union. We may have godly sorrow for sin, we may turn from it with an intense hatred, we may resolve never again to commit offenses against God, and yet we may not stand in a saving relation to Christ. Observe the direction of our Divine Master to his disciples just before his ascension: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in (properly into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." On the authority of this scripture we affirm that neither faith nor repentance alone, but these with a final condition, which is baptism, advance us into a sacred and redeeming relationship with Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

And here is an answer (this merely in passing) to the objection frequently offered by those who are out of the church, against identification with the body of Christ, and in favor of the moral conduct theory alone. Baptism is the church's rite and brings us into union with the church's head, and without it all the good qualities of life and character, of which we are inclined to boast, will never create, or rather re-create us, new creatures in Christ. This is the truth the Saviour announced at his baptism and expounded during his ministry. "Thus it

becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

In the Saviour's memorable conversation with Nicodemus he says plainly, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." If we take "water," in this scripture, to mean baptism, and we surely do, the design of the ordinance will be apparent.

When, on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached Jesus Christ to those bewildered thousands, and conviction pierced their hearts, there can be no doubt but that they believed; and yet they inquired what they should do. The reply of the apostle was, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Then this record is made: "They that gladly received his word were baptized."

I am dealing only with the most familiar incidents of the Holy Scriptures, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.

Take the conversion of Saul of Tarsus—a persecutor of the church, a blasphemer, breathing out threatenings against the precious children of God, murdering the saints, shutting others in prison, exceedingly mad against all that savored of Christ, determined in his zeal, to annihilate all that the Christ had instituted. But he is halted, stricken down, told whom he is persecuting, and sent to Ananias to learn what he must do, i. e., what condition he shall yet supply in order to the pardon of his sins. Hear Ananias: "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." We, too, are baptized into the name of Christ, and through his name we have remission. Our sins are washed away.

Bearing on this there is another scripture to which I must refer, viz., Rom. 5: 17, 18. "God be thanked that, though you were servants of sin, you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered you, being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Note the inferential distinction made in the above scripture—doctrine and form of doctrine. The summary of New Testament doctrinal truth may be given thus: Christ Jesus died for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Christ Jesus was buried that he might be the destruction of the grave. Christ Jesus arose again from the dead in resurrection life, that we poor, perishing sinners might be justified before God, as though we had never transgressed. These are the doctrines which we must believe to enter upon the saved life. But there

is something more. We must also obey from the heart the form of these doctrines delivered unto us. Hence I suggest this arrangement: *First Doctrine*, Christ died. *Form*, Baptism. " * * So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." *Second Doctrine*, Christ was buried. *Form*, Baptism. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism." *Third Doctrine*, Christ arose from the dead. *Form*, Baptism, "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life." In Romans 6: 3-5, we have, in careful analysis, the doctrine and the form of doctrine; the former to be believed and the latter to be obeyed. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

The design of baptism then is, through faith, repentance and obedience, to bring us into the saving relationship with Christ, and open up before us the way, and the only way, in which we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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THE EUCHARIST,—BREAD AND WINE.

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The literature of this subject is a library of itself, and the innumerable theories, the subtle speculations, the intricate mysticism, and the profound theology which the human brain has spun around the simple emblems of this holy feast is, to say the least, conclusive proof of the deep impress which it has made upon the thought of twenty centuries. May we not go even further than this, and witness in the Passover Supper twenty more centuries of religious history centering upon the idea shadowed forth in the lamb that was slain and the blood that was shed for the deliverance of God's people.

A ritual which has thus persisted for two-thirds of the lapse of time, first as the pivot of a great theocracy, and then as the central force of a spiritual empire swaying half the world, must indeed be vitalized by a fundamental principle, essential to the existence of society and the well-being of mankind.

It is inevitable that a discussion of the Eucharist must begin with the moral lapse of the world. If history and human ob-